Trust Yourself: A Decision-Making Toolkit

Inspired by our conversation with Amy Armstrong · Hosted by Karen Chellew and Catherine Shanahan

Divorce fills your head with other people's voices — your spouse, your attorney, your family, the internet. This toolkit helps you find your own voice again, one small decision at a time.

1 Sort Every Spinning Decision: Yes, No, or Later

If you keep replaying the same decision for hours, days, or weeks, that spinning is a signal — not that the decision is impossible, but that you've stopped trusting yourself. When you do trust yourself, most decisions land quickly in one of three buckets:

YES	NO	LATER
It's true for me. I act on it and move forward.	It's not right for me. I release it — no re-litigating.	Not a decision for today. I park it and stop carrying it.

Give yourself the permission Karen gives clients all the time: “The good news is — you don't have to decide that today.” And when decision day arrives, honor it. Today is the day.

2 Build the Muscle with Small Decisions

The bigger the decision, the bigger the fear — and fear crowds out your best thinking. So practice where the stakes are low. At the grocery store, with a small purchase, with tonight's dinner, pause and ask:

> “What's true for me right now?”

It sounds simple, but every small answer builds your capacity to face the big ones — the house, the settlement, the next chapter — with a clear head instead of a panicked one.

3 Choose Support People Who Hold Your Future

Not everyone who makes you feel good is good for you right now. A true support person doesn't just validate what's wrong — they believe in where you're going. Check the ones your people actually do:

- ☐ Holds a positive vision for your future — six months, two years, five years from now
- ☐ Reminds you of who you really are, so you don't become someone you're not under stress
- ☐ Lets you vent the jealousy, hurt, and fear — without feeding the negativity
- ☐ Supports your future, not a mission to "win at all costs" or bash your ex

4 Flip the Script: From "Don't Want" to "Do Want"

We're far better at naming what we don't want than what we do. Whenever you hear yourself saying no, can't, shouldn't, or "I have no choice," pause and reframe:

- What is it that I do want?
- What would a good day look like?
- What do I want for my children — even if it comes through their other parent?
- Where can I claim what I want, instead of managing what they do? ("I'm preserving my energy. I'm going to step away.")

5 Before Any Big Decision: Get Financially Clear

Fear-driven moves — selling the house, downsizing, signing early — made before you know your full marital financial picture are the ones people regret most. Take pause. Your next best step is always financial clarity: verified documents, a complete picture, and decisions that match your truth and your reality. That's when you sleep at night.

Clarity is power.

Ready to see your complete financial picture before you negotiate? The MDS Financial Portrait™ organizes, verifies, and models your finances so you can decide with confidence.

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